

REMARKS

Applicants have carefully reviewed the Office Action mailed October 6, 2006, prior to preparing this response. Currently claims 1-48 are pending in the application, wherein claims 38-46 and 48 have been allowed; claims 1-5, 15-28 and 35-37 have been rejected; claims 6, 7, 9-14, 29, 31-34 and 47 have been withdrawn from consideration consequent an Examiner-induced requirement for restriction; and claims 8 and 30 have been objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim. Claims 1, 15, 25, 35, 39-46 and 48 have been amended, and claims 5-14, 22-24, 28-34 and 47 have been cancelled with this paper. The Specification has also been amended in view of objections made in the Office Action. No new matter has been added with these amendments. Favorable consideration of the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Objections

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for pointing out apparent errors in the dependency of claims 39-48. As requested by the Examiner, the dependency of claims 39-48 has been amended to correctly depend from claim 38. It is believed that these claims are presently in condition for allowance.

The Examiner has requested that the use of trademarks in the application be in conformance with the guidelines provided in the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure. As respected by the Examiner, all usages of trademarks have been capitalized and accompanied by generic terminology describing the goods associated with the trademarks in accordance with M.P.E.P. §608.01(v).

The disclosure is objected to for failing to maintain consistency of naming element 20 throughout the specification. In view of the Examiner's request, the specification has been appropriately amended in order to consistently identify element 20 as the "inner member."

Claims 8 and 30 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but otherwise indicated as allowable. In view of this indication, claims 1 and 25 have been amended to include all the limitations of claims 8 and 30, respectively, including limitations presented in any intervening claims. In making the amendments to claims 1 and 25, Applicants do not concede the appropriateness of rejections made in the Office Action. Favorable consideration of

claims 1 and 25, and claims depending therefrom, in the form of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1-5, 15-18, 20-28 and 35-37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bernstein, U.S. Patent No. 3,157,245, in view of Werblud, U.S. Pub. No. 2003/0051939. Claim 19 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bernstein, U.S. Patent No. 3,157,245, in view of Werblud, U.S. Pub. No. 2003/0051939, and further in view of Oliveira et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,310,961. Claims 1 and 25 have been amended in an attempt to advance prosecution to allowance without reaching the merits of the rejections. In view of the amendments to claims 1 and 25 and the cancellation of claims 22-24, the claim rejections are deemed to be moot, as each of claims 1 and 25 currently includes limitations previously indicated in the Office Action as not taught in the prior art. Claims 1 and 25, as well as claims depending from claims 1 and 25, are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested. It is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Issuance of a Notice of Allowance in due course is requested. If a telephone conference might be of assistance, please contact the undersigned attorney at (612) 677-9050.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert J. Oliveira et al.

By their Attorney,

Date: _____

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Jason W. Burgmaier, Reg. No. 57,222
CROMPTON, SEAGER & TUFTE, LLC
1221 Nicollet Avenue, Suite 800
Minneapolis, MN 55403-2420
Telephone: (612) 677-9050
Facsimile: (612) 359-9349